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RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 6790  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001292

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SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: NORWEGIANS BRIEF CO-CHAIRS ON NORTHEAST VISITS

REF: COLOMBO 1286 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: James R. Moore, Charge' d'Affaires. 1.4(b,d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Norwegian Special Envoy Jon Hanssen-Bauer, Norwegian Ambassador Hans Brattskar, and Swedish Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) head Ulf Henricsson briefed Chiefs of Mission and Charges from the Co-chairs and Nordic monitor countries August 8 following their August 5-7 trips to the Northeast, including the site of recent LTTE-military engagement near Muttur and the Malivaru water sluice. The three discussed the future of the SLMM, the water sluice issue, the humanitarian situation, and the August 6 massacre of 15 local staff members of a French NGO in Muttur (reftel). Ambassador Brattskar asked embassies to press the Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) for an independent, international investigation of conducted into the NGO murders and to register strong concern over allegations of the LTTE massacring Muslims. Hanssen-Bauer expressed support for a co-chairs meeting on the margins of the UNGA in September. End Summary.

¶2. (C) CDA and other co-chair Chiefs of Mission representing Japan and the EU, as well as representatives from other Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) countries Sweden and Finland (represented by the German DCM and the EU Deputy), attended an August 8 briefing by Norwegian Special Envoy Jon Hanssen-Bauer, Norwegian Ambassador Hans Brattskar, and Swedish Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) head Ulf Henricsson. The three discussed the Norwegians' and SLMM's trips to the northeast August 5-7 to meet with LTTE leadership and assess the ground situation near the Malivaru dam and in Muttur and the implications for the monitoring mission, peace facilitation, and humanitarian efforts.

Future of the SLMM

¶3. (C) Brattskar and Hanssen-Bauer reported they had again urged the Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) leadership to consider all SLMM monitors as representatives of a UN-type organization rather as of their respective countries. The LTTE refused, maintaining its position that monitors from EU-member countries should leave the mission by September 1.

The GSL expressed to the Norwegians its desire for the SLMM to continue in country. Brattskar added that civilians and NGO representatives they had talked to during their travels agreed the northeast would be a much more dangerous area without the SLMMs presence.

14. (C) Brattskar said that as of September 1, Norway and Iceland, the two non-EU monitors, will fill some of the vacating Swedish, Dane, and Finn positions, bringing the combined total to 30, but sharply down from the current total of 57. Some key personnel from EU-member countries will work from the Colombo office for a limited time. The reduction would confine SLMM activities to Trincomalee, LTTE-controlled Kilinochchi, and Colombo, with approximately 10 in each office. Brattskar reiterated, as he has told us before, that Norway's dual role as facilitator and primary peace monitor will put it under great political pressure.

#### Disputed Dam -----

15. (C) On Sunday, August 6, the Tigers informed the Norwegians they would open the Malivaru sluice gate for humanitarian reasons. Brattskar said he informed the Foreign Minister at 1:30 PM on August 7, who agreed to convey to other high-ranking GSL members, that the LTTE intended to open the sluice at 4:00 PM that afternoon. Nevertheless, the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) began shelling the area late that afternoon.

16. (C) Brattskar confirmed that as of midday August 8 the Malivaru dam had still not been opened. He said the GSL had

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exaggerated the number of people affected "to justify the action they've taken." Rather than supplying water to 30,000 acres, he said, the Malivaru sluice irrigates 10,000 acres.

#### Humanitarian Issues -----

17. (C) The Norwegians related that they and the UN have repeatedly requested security guarantees to go into Muttur and Malivaru to assess the IDP humanitarian situation and reports of the LTTE murdering 100-plus Muslims. The ICRC in Trincomalee, like the UN and Norway, has requested clearance but cannot enter the areas due to Sinhalese mobs in surrounding villagers who will not allow teams to pass and which, according to the Norwegians, the GSL has chosen not to control.

18. (C) SLMM head Ulf Henricsson, analyzing the GSL's refusal to allow him to enter Muttur, argued that the GSL is removing evidence while not allowing monitors to enter, then bringing in journalists by boat when they are ready.

#### NGO Massacre -----

19. (C) The Norwegians would not speculate on who might have killed 15 staff members from a French tsunami NGO in Muttur (reftel), but called the killings "unprecedented," stressing that an independent, international investigation must be conducted. Brattskar asked that COMs press the GSL to institute such an investigation promptly.

#### What's Next? -----

110. (C) Brattskar and Hanssen-Bauer told the co-chairs they had reiterated to the GSL and Defense Secretary Gothabaya Rajapaksa the Norwegians' willingness to play the role of peace process facilitator, but that the GSL has offered nothing substantial for Norwegian negotiators to take to the LTTE as an offer. Hanssen-Bauer said he stressed to both sides that if they prefer to resort to military means, there

is no role for the Norwegians. The Defense Secretary in turn maintained that the military objective was to open the sluice gate and to clear the LTTE from the area surrounding Muttur to secure safe passage for IDPs back to their homes.

¶11. (C) Hanssen-Bauer argued that it might still be possible for the international community to influence the GSL. He urged the co-chairs to impress on the GSL that their military actions are unacceptable and that they must allow independent, international investigations into the NGO killings immediately. He stressed he believed that the Tokyo Declaration is still a valid document and suggested the co-chairs meet on the margin of the UNGA in September. The EU plans already to demarche the GSL on the above. Embassy supports making a strongly worded demarche this week to the GSL, including on ceasing hostilities, returning to negotiations, an independent investigation of the NGO murders, and allowing access by both SLMM monitors and NGOs to affected areas.

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